

What is not included in the traditional Lutheran doctrine is the renewal of the believer and the removal of sin. This exclusion was based on the philosophical assumption that God's being is separated from his effects. Therefore, with reference to the doctrine of justification, post-*Formula* Lutheran theology did not consider the ontological dimension. All the justified believer can claim by faith is that he understands he has a new position before God. In contrast to this, the Finnish scholars have shown that according to Luther, justification not only changes the sinner's self-understanding, but changes the sinner ontologically by making him or her righteous. God's grace and his gift of righteousness are "donated" to a believer by virtue of the indwelling Christ.

Carl Braaten concludes, "In the future Luther-scholarship around the world will have to be in dialogue with the Finnish picture of Luther" (75). In this conclusion he is, of course, right. The fact that this new Luther research was motivated by ecumenical concerns does not lessen the significance of the discoveries.

For Lutherans, and other Christians as well, the work of Mannermaa and his colleagues constitutes a revolutionary reinterpretation of Luther's theology, the implications of which remain to be seen. Carl Braaten wonders if it makes sense for Lutherans to continue holding justification to be the chief doctrine of the Christian faith. The same could be asked of any other Christian who is tempted to put all of his theological eggs into the forensic justification basket!

Andrews University

C. RAYMOND HOLMES

Bray, Gerald, ed. *Romans*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. 6. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998. xxviii + 404 pp. Hardcover, \$39.99.

This new but old work offers a unique opportunity for laypersons to drink easily from the well of historic Christian theology by collecting the best and most representative patristic writings on Romans. The goal of the proposed twenty-seven-volume series is "the revitalization of Christian teaching based on classical Christian exegesis." In an atmosphere stuffy with modern works, this collection of patristic writings is a fresh breeze from the past.

Bray draws from a variety of early writers from Clement of Rome (second century) to John of Damascus (mid-eighth century) in his survey of early Christian thinking on Paul's epistle to the Romans. A selection of quotations from Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian gives the reader a sense of the earliest Christian thought, before commentary-writing became common. The first surviving commentary on Romans penned by Origen is quoted extensively, as is the work by the fourth century "Ambrosiaster." His literal commentary is one of the most helpful sources in the work. Several voices from the Antiochene school of biblical exegesis—Diodore of Tarsus, Apollinaris of Laodicea, and Theodore of Mopsuestia—are also utilized. The famous preacher John Chrysostom left a series of homilies on Romans, which add a practical flavor to this work. Though Augustine of Hippo never wrote a formal commentary on Romans, much of his thought, which is expressed in various writings, has a direct connection with Romans and is appropriately included. The final major work of Theodoret of Cyr is particularly helpful because of his emphasis upon historical and grammatical detail. Other Syriac and Coptic sources are included in an effort to

represent the entire perspective of early thought.

Bray's work opens with a short introduction to Romans dealing with the author and historical setting of the book. He also includes an explanation of his selections of patristic quotations and their relationship to the original sources. The book is conveniently arranged according to the text of Scripture, having been divided into pericopes, usually several verses in length. Each section has a heading (e.g., "1:1-7, Paul and the Gospel"), followed by quotation of the biblical passage (RSV) across the full width of the page. Bray first provides an overview of the ancient comments, after which he summarizes main arguments, occasionally highlights unique contributions, and provides some background for interpretation. The actual quotations from the authors are grouped under helpful topical headings that allow the reader to quickly scan the main ideas.

Any work must be evaluated in terms of its purpose. The editor has clearly defined his goal as making the thoughts of early Christian writers accessible to the layperson or scholarly preacher, and by that measure he has succeeded. He has sifted through centuries of ancient writing, carefully chosen the best, translated and edited original writings, and organized them into a form that makes the material accessible to modern readers. Bray's success required several editorial decisions.

One of the inherent difficulties of a work comprised primarily of brief quotations is a lack of contextualization. The earlier materials, particularly, are drawn from works that were not directed toward the study of Romans. The question is: How well does the meaning of the original writer's quotation match its placement in relation to Romans? Without the context of the original work, it is hard to know. While Bray is a well-qualified editor, the reader should understand that he or she is at his mercy.

For example, one quotation may represent the theologically mature Augustine, while the next may come from a much earlier stage in his development. Also a basic understanding of the platonic influence behind Origen's writings is necessary to understand his words.

The reader should be aware that a basic knowledge of the flow of historical theology, which is outside the scope of this book, is a prerequisite to proper understanding of individual patristic writings.

Perhaps the chief contribution of Bray's work is to make texts that have been untranslated or poorly translated readable to the layperson. He acknowledges that some materials have been translated with much smoothing and even summarizing for the sake of brevity and clarity. While this benefits the reader, it must be remembered that some quotations are actually paraphrases or interpretations.

Overall this is an excellent series that will surely accomplish the goal of revitalizing Christian teaching with classical exegesis. Bray has provided immeasurable service in making these works accessible to the modern reader. Although this book will not substitute for an understanding of historical theology, it will enrich the study of Romans for any layperson or preacher.